

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 PANAMA 01842 201856Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 SAB-02 /071 W
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R 201827Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6166
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 1842

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN

USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO

PANCANAL FOR IO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PN
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

FOLLOWING FROM USIS/PANAMA O R 201820Z MAR 78 SENT ACTION USINFO
WASHDC INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 20 MAR 78 REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE UNCLAS

E.O. 11652: N/A

MEDIA REACTION

1-PANAMA CITY-- ON THE TREATY FRONT, CHIEF NEGOTIATOR ROMULO
ESCOBAR BETHANCOURT AND NEGOTIATOR AND MINISTER OF
EDUCATION
ARISTIDES ROYO CALLED A MEETING THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 17 WITH
CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PRESS. WHILE THE FOREIGN PRESS
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WAS EXCLUDED, USIS LEARNED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING WAS
TO SET DOWN GUIDELINES FOR THE PANAMANIAN PRESS ON THE HANDLING
OF THE TREATY STORY, ESPECIALLY THE DECONCINI AMENDMENT,

2-THE ONLY SUBSTANTIVE REPORT OF THE ABOVE BRIEFING APPEARED ON
PAGE ONE OF GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED CRITICA MARCH 18 IN A

LUIS CASTILLA BRAVO BYLINER ENTITLED "THE GOVERNMENT STUDIES THE AMENDMENTS WITHOUT HASTE." ACCORDING TO CASTILLA BRAVO, THE NEED FOR A SERIOUS UNHURRIED STUDY OF THE TREATY AS APPROVED BY THE SENATE WAS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED IN THE BRIEFING. HE CONTINUES: "WE ARE AWARE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S LIMITED EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH THE SENATORS, EVEN THOSE OF HIS OWN PARTY, HAS BEEN THE CORNERSTONE (SIC) OF THE IMPEDIMENTS TO RATIFICATION; INEXPERIENCE THAT CAUSED CARTER WITH HIS 'VIRGIN' SPIRIT TO CARRY OFF THE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE FIRST PLACE. THIS CENTRAL FACT MUST BE KEPT IN MIND BECAUSE IF THE TREATY IS NOT RATIFIED IN THIS FIRST YEAR OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, IT WOULD HAVE TO WAIT SEVERAL DECADES BEFORE ANOTHER PRESIDENT WOULD DECIDE TO CONTINUE THE EFFORT OR IT WOULD CAUSE THE SACRIFICE OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES TO END THE AMERICAN COLONIAL PRESENCE IN OUR NATION."

3-THE CRITICA ARTICLE CONTINUES: "FOR NOW THE DECONCINI AMENDMENT CAN BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE CONTEXT OF THE "TORRIJOS - CARTER UNDERSTANDING", EVEN THOUGH IT WAS PUT THERE IN BAD FAITH AND WE WILL GIVE OUR FINAL CONCLUSION AS TO ITS REACH LATER, HOWEVER, AND THIS WAS THE GENERAL CONCLUSION (OF THE MEETING), WE MUST BE PREPARED TO LISTEN TO MORE AMENDMENTS WITH WORSE DIATRIBES AGAINST PANAMA AND ITS LEADERS, AND MOREOVER TENS OF ADDITIONAL RESERVATIONS. AND UP TO NOW WE HAVE HEARD VERY FEW HEIRS OF THE SPIRIT AND INTELLIGENCE OF A JEFFERSON, LINCOLN AND BENJAMIN FRANKLIN."

4-A STATEMENT BY PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR GABRIEL LEWIS G. MADE IN UNCLASSIFIED

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MIAMI BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR PANAMA WAS FRONT-PAGED IN SUNDAY'S LA REPUBLICA DOMINICAL AND ALL OTHER DAILIES MONDAY. AFTER A BRIEF INTRODUCTION, AMBASSADOR LEWIS SAID THE FOLLOWING: "PRESIDENT CARTER IS CLOSER TO THE MORALITY AND DIGNITY OF HIS PEOPLE THAN SOME OF THE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN. WHAT SENATOR DECONCINI ADDED TO THE TREATY OF NEUTRALITY, AND WHAT HE SAID YESTERDAY HAS WOUNDED THE MOST INTIMATE FEELINGS OF NEARLY TWO MILLION PANAMANIAN. I PRAY TO GOD THAT 32 (SIC) WILL BE ON THE VALUE SCALE OF OUR PEOPLE THE FIGURE THAT WILL INSPIRE US TO KEEP STRUGGLING UNTIL WE ACHIEVE OUR IDEAL. PANAMA IS A SMALL COUNTRY, BUT IS A NATION OF EUNUCHS. LATIN AMERICA, AWAKE* WE HAVE BEEN HUMILIATED, EVERYONE, 32 MORE ITEMS."

5- A REVIEW OF EDITORIAL OPINION WILL FOLLOW LATER THIS DATE.

ITEM UNQUOTE

JORDEN

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NNN

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